

1992

Meetings as specified are held at the School of Mines and Industries, Lydlard Street Sth., Art Building, commencing at 7.30 p.m.
EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM CROCKERS, cor. STURT AND ARM-STRONG STS., BALLARAT, at 9.30 a.m. for FULL DAY OUTINGS OR AT 1.30 p.m. for HALF DAY*

*Seasons
Greetings*

*Merry
Christmas
and a
New Year
of
Happiness*



Diary

Committee Meeting January 28 at 7.30 at the home of L. and L. Fink P.O. Meredith.

Congratulations to Sue and Melinda on their completion of the H.S.C. congratulation to you both.



40th Anniversary Dinner.

Many Members, former Members, Other Clubs and friends made this a very memorable evening, all were welcomed by President Ken McDonnell, to the very enjoyable dinner, ably supplied by the members of the ladies Bowling Club, Thank you for a very enjoyable meal.

During the Evening Greg Binns related some of the well known History of the Club and a few snippets of relatively unknown History.

The Bestowing of two Life Memberships by the Club was ably carried out by our President and assisted by Carl Gregurke who handed the certificates to Mr Peter Fry and Mr Harry Hooper both were for many years of service in many ways to the Ballarat Field Naturalists Club.

Allison Dalman Presented Mrs Fry and Mrs Hooper with a very nice posie of flowers.

Some slides of past Campouts were shown to all present showing some of the lighter sides of campouts and excursions, and many nostalgic moments were recalled.

This was a very enjoyable evening, thanks to Ken Hammond for his organising abilities.

L.F.

In this article I will report on some of the plants seen on our Campbelltown excursion.

Our first stop was at the southern end of the Sandon State Forest, off Deep Creek Road. The abundance of Chocolate Lillies gave many open areas a purple hue. Some of the other plants which were flowering were Milkmaids, Stinking Pennywort, Bulbine Lilly, Austral Bear's-ear, Yam Daisy, Austral Forget-me-not, Scaly Buttons, Yellow Star, Common Riceflower, Cotton Fireweed and Candles. A few orchids were found: Musky Caledenia, Purplish Beard Orchid and Plain Sun Orchid. Blue Pincushions were heralding the approaching summer by beginning to flower. Timber cutting, grazing and other human activity in earlier times has introduced a large number of species into the area including Quaking Grass, Silvery Hair Grass, Erect Chickweed, Ribwort, Onion Grass and Subterranean Clover.

An unusual eucalypt, E. nortonii Mealy Bundy, was seen on private property off Captain's Gully Road at Sandon. This tree is similar and closely related to E. gonicalyx Long-leaved Box, but has glaucous buds and fruits with a whitish, waxy appearance. It occurs mainly in NSW, Northeast Victoria and East Gippsland. On the roadside were a few plants of Templetonia stenophylla Leafy Templetonia. It is a member of the pea family which had finished flowering but carried curved seed pods.

Thanks to Frank Harrap for researching and leading the excursion and to Pat Murphy for preparing a plant list of the areas visited.

JG



Happy
Holidays

Merry
Christmas

Information for March '93 Campout.

The March '93 Campout will be held at Kangaroo-bie, Princetown on the 6, 7 and 8 of March.

Kangaroo-bie is a well equipped hostel with bunk style accommodation (Doonas and Pillows are supplied,) Disabled access and recreation rooms are excellent.

Fees. \$75 which includes accommodation for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, and all meals from Saturday Breakfast to Monday lunch. Program will include

Great Ocean Rd.

Shipwreck Coast.

Beach walks, Flowers and Birds

Bush walks and Glowworms.

There will be more detailed information later.

At previous Campouts we have hired a bus, we would appreciate it if you would indicate if you would like us to do the same again. The cost would be Approximately \$7--8 per day if the bus is filled.

Because this is a Holiday Weekend, numbers are required a month before hand so please book by the 5th of February 1993. Perhaps you could this as an opportunity to introduce others to Field Naturalists.

Please Book and pay in full at the 4th February Meeting.

Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat Medal.

The Club Medal award concept has been discussed and passed at recent General and Committee meetings. A medal can be awarded to a member who has significantly contributed to the club's activities and to the furtherance of conservation and natural history in the community.

Nominations are now called for so that a medal can be awarded early in 1993. Nomination forms and details of selection criteria are available from the secretary.

Criteria for the award include:

- * Financial membership for 10 years.
- * Executive and Committee membership.
- * Work done within the club.
- * Promotion of natural history in the community.
- * Participation in Club projects.

Field Naturalists Club Campout Barramunga, Otways - 20 to 22 November 1993

Once upon a time there was a group of very sane people seeking the betterment of society by pushing forth the frontiers of botanical knowledge. There was a lovely fairy-grandmother called Florence who made delicious pancakes for all the youngsters in the kingdom to enjoy. There was Greg who played oldies music on Lindsay's antiquated gramophone way down yonder in the paw-paw patch. There was bold Ken who liked to pit himself against very large landslides, and Avis who dressed in long green gaiters and big cosy coats. Genny liked to sit quietly and read while Lindsay preferred to tell wonderful stories to the eager children.

Peter-Peter-left-overs-eater lived with his wife Claire in a happy shiny flower-power house with his four angelic daughters. And they all would have lived happily ever after if it weren't for Big, Bad John.

One day, Big Bad John took all these people into a tall forest of Grey gums and Messmates, and locked them all up in draughty humpies with no windows, inhabited by fearsome spiders, ferocious mosquitoes and blood sucking leeches. He made them stoke up a fire under the water tank if they dared to want hot showers, and play table tennis without any bats.

Luckily for the people of the kingdom, Big Bad John had forgotten to leave his wife Elaine, daughter Sue and son Carl at home. While he was sleeping on the first night, they slipped a "compassion" pill into his unsuspecting mouth, and when the dawn came to spill its glory (not to mention the contents of it's clouds) over the rolling landscape of the camp Big Bad John wasn't bad any more, and everyone forgot about his crime and decided to have lots and lots of fun while they were there. There was great rejoicing amongst the people of the kingdom, and to celebrate they enthusiastically set out to frolic by the nearby waterfall. Falling water there was. Frolicking however proved difficult. Despite the soggy conditions and prevalence of dangerous carnivorous snails all of the party emerged triumphant at the end of the walking trail to gaze with awe at the cascading water of Stephenson's Falls. Upon return from this adventure all the party retired to the large hall to vie for spots around the blazing homely hearth. Here they spent a relaxing couple of hours drying sodden clothes and pressing their noses to the glass to spy on a magnificent male bower bird and his harem of four drab females. After much nourishment and airing the party was ready to once again make a foray into their new surrounds. This time however they took their automated chariots

to convey them around the district. They came across a charming little village called "Apollo Bay" and while the men hunted for the staples of life (food and wine) the women gathered shopping receipts in quaint boutiques. The cold and wet unfortunately deterred the party from straying onto the beach, so after a sojourn at the local pier the party boarded their chariots. The drive home was proving spectacular as the glory of the beach and undulating hills rolled out below, when suddenly the procession was accosted by menacing landslides which temporarily halted our progress. While Carl jumped on the edge to try and induce some more to fall down, the responsible grown-ups shepherded their chariots safely out of the way, while the Dalman's chastised the others for ignoring the warning sign; "Road Closed" seemed explicit enough for them. Curiously however we were all quite satisfied with our rare find, and it was only after careful examination of the disaster site that we set out to find a different yellow-brick-road home.

That evening there was much merriment in the kingdom. The youngsters watched in open mouthed wonder as the adults they had come to respect so deeply sang "Where Oh Where Is Little Mary" and stuffed Paw Paws in their pockets. Believing that children should be seen and not heard we decided not to tell them the paw paws weren't really there. The night was passed in fine style until midnight came and turned us all into pumpkins, forcing us to trundle back to our breezy abodes.

Sunday morning dawned clear, but the youngsters, remembering that Saturday had also dawned clear, declined the offer of a walk in the forest. The adults however, who had not taken heed of "The Moral Of The Story" of the trip to the waterfall set out into the chill morning, only to return some time later cowed and discouraged by yet another freak downpour. The youngsters wagged their fingers but decided to take pity when they heard that Claire had suffered the trauma of 29 leeches on her feet and legs during the constitutional. We decided they had learned their lesson.

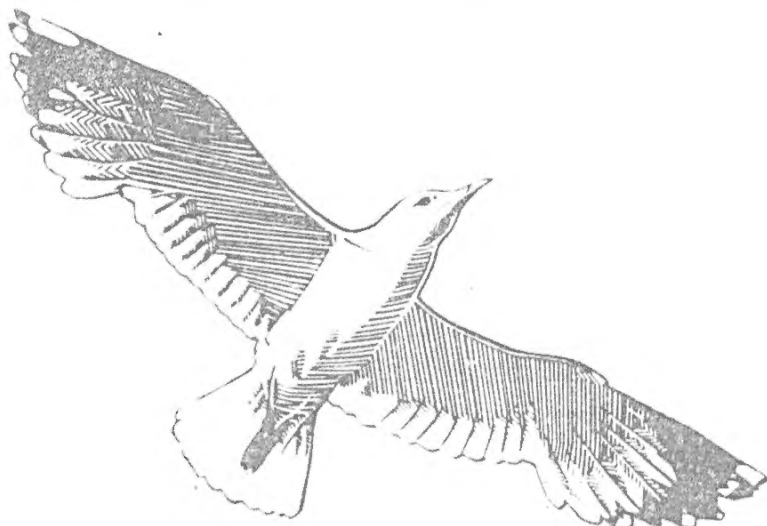
And so it was that we came to share our last lunch, swapping nostalgic memories of past club campouts and arriving at the conclusion that we really wouldn't have had the weekend any other way. After a careful clean up and indulgent goodbye we all waved farewell to Big Bad John's prison camp and headed our separate ways. In the end everyone learned the Moral of the Story (never place yourself at the mercy of the weather-man!) and they all had a wonderful time and lived Happily Ever After.

Melinda Dalman

Mount Beckworth is a Scenic Reserve of 580 hectare. The rock of Mount Beckworth is 400 million year old Devonian granite. Similar rock is found at other places in the area such as Mt Alexander, Melville caves and Mt Bolton. The area is surrounded by Pliocene basalt which is less than 5 million years old. The granite has weathered to a sandy soil. Granite sand has been extracted for road making and is used on the footpath around Lake Wendouree. Creeks have formed at the junction of the granite and basalt on the east, north and west sides of Mount Beckworth. The change in rocks and soil is clear as you cross the bridge when driving in to the reserve.

Rain was just beginning when we left Ballarat, but we hoped for better conditions when we reached the north side of the Dividing Range. We inspected the area south of the entrance gate on the east side of the reserve. In the open grassy areas Early Nancy, Yellow Stars and Golden Moths were flowering. Along a well drained ridge we found a wider variety of plants. The woodland on the lower slopes of the Mount is dominated by Long-leaf Box in association with Ribbon Gum. The cool, wet spring has delayed the flowering of many plants. Orchids found flowering included Dwarf Greenhood, Waxlip, Pink Fingers and Tiger Orchid. A week earlier Blue Fairies were found on the northern side of the reserve.

Steady rain caused most people to leave binoculars in the car so few birds were seen. Fantail cuckoos were heard and Spotted Pardalotes seen in the trees. The wet weather suited the slime moulds. Several jellylike masses, called plasmodium, were slowly creeping over the ground. This is the vegetative stage of the fungus which feeds on decaying wood. The plasmodium completes its life cycle by developing masses of mouldlike spores often on the stumps and bark of trees. The rain continued and intensified so after lunch the excursion was abandoned. JG.



ORCHIDS OF THE BALLARAT DISTRICT

No. 5 of a series.

Caleana major

Flying Duck Orchid

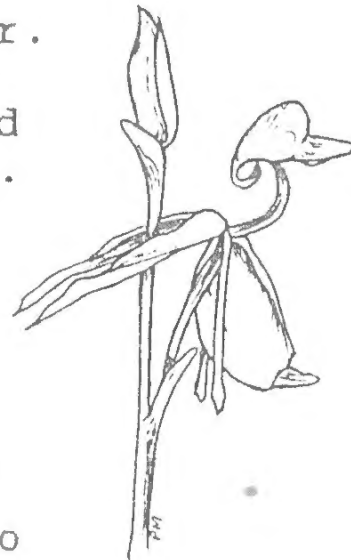
Flowering time: November and December.

In the Ballarat district, this orchid is found in open forest or heathland. It is widespread but not often locally common, although on rare occasions it has been seen in colonies of up to forty plants. The narrow, basal leaf is purplish brown and a sheathing bract is attached at the base of the fine stem. The plant, with its one to five distinct flowers, grows to about 30cms high.

This orchid gains its common name from the shape of the flower which strongly resembles a duck in flight. The inverted dark brown shiny flower has the labellum part uppermost and is the "head" of the duck. The lateral petals spread back to form the "wings" of the bird and the very large column wings form the "body".

Some of the areas where this orchid may be seen flowering at present are: Clunes, Creswick, Enfield, Ross Creek and many of our roadsides.

PJM.



Campbelltown area Excursion.

The day before the excursion I made a hurried visit to the five sites that we might have visited and as a result ruled out the swamps, and the area where Pat, Bill and I had surprised (or been surprised) by a large Brown Snake three weeks earlier. Also I switched the order in which the other two sites were to be visited, which later caused some confusion for Greg and party, for which I apologise.

Just before Campbelltown, we turned East on to Deep Creek Road and entered the S.E. corner of the Sandon State Forest by Tom Jones Track. After the areas that we used to visit North of the Campbelltown - Newstead Rd had been spoilt as a result of firewood cutting, I had discovered the moist green gully that we were to explore first.

The timing of our visit was sheer good fortune, as the wildflowers were at their very best, with literally thousands of Chocolate Lilies in full bloom, in much smaller numbers were Early Nancies and the occasional Sun Orchid and Purplish Beard Orchids. In the damper areas there were good clumps of tall Sundews and some Rock Ferns and in the creek further down the gully a fine specimen of Wirilda. *Wahlenbergia* sp. were dotted about on the gully slopes.

Early on a very obliging Buff-Rumped Thornbill put on a good show and we disturbed a Spotted Pardalote near its Nesthole. The mournful call of the White Winged Choughs was ever present and Rufous Whistlers were wide spread and very vocal.

Honeyeaters were in short supply and only Fuscus and White Plumed were seen here and near the dam where we had lunch. White throated Treecreepers were constantly on the move and the occasional Brown Treecreeper was seen, Pallid Cuckoos were calling and a Shining Bronze Cuckoo was heard and seen by some of us, I didn't recognise the call but Jack Netherway prompted us to spot a Sacred Kingfisher.

Dusky Woodswallows were seen in flight and at the nest, we lunched close to a nearby dam and Margaret and Greg showed us the Olive Backed Oriole's Nest that they had found earlier. The Male was around and the Female's head and back could occasionally be seen in the nest. A Grey Fantail's nest was also seen.

We then went on to the second stop, off the Captains Gully - Sandon Road. This area was alive with Honeyeaters (particularly New Holland) and other birds three weeks earlier but now that the hedge wattles had finished flowering and the afternoon had warmed up, there was little bird activity.

The many clumps of Tangled Guinea Flower had very few blooms and the leafy templetonia, in full bloom earlier, was now starting to set seed and was hard to find (Pat had said that when she found it that it normally occurs no nearer than the Bendigo area unfortunately, she was unable to be with us on this excursion but had kindly provided a provisional plant list which John has Augmented).

We walked part way up the block to see Eucalyptus nortonii - Mealy Bundy and then turned back towards the cars. There nine Crimson Rosella feathers and several large Owl pellets en route and quite a number of pellets under a Pine Tree one of a group of three just North of a dam. Ken McDonnell was dissecting out some small bones from one of the pellets when a Powerful Owl swooped down below a neighboring Pine and flew across the dam to settle well up and in good view in yet another pine. The chatter of smaller harrassing birds made it easy to locate this bird as it sat stoically and very watchful for the next twenty minutes or so until we finally and very reluctantly left for home.

My thanks to Pat and Bill and to John for the plantlist and to that huge Owl with it's large orange-yellow claws for providing the highlights to a rewarding day in the bush.

F.H.

Australian Native Mammals.

The Eastern Barred Bandicoot *Peremeles gunnii*
This rare bandicoot may have been around Ballarat once therefore I have included it.

It seems to have favoured the Basalt plains it is conspicuously marked. in Tasmania it favours open grassland it is one of the few grassland species to survive in Victoria, it is found near Hamilton surviving in grassland and suburban gardens.

Actually in a disused rubbish dump where old car bodies may give it some protection.

Females have eight teats usually two or three are born, the gestation period is probably twelve days. Young disperse as independant individuals at from three to five months old, after birth females may breed when the young are three months old.

They are only common near Hamilton, if the few that are there could be called common.

They are, however, quite common in Tasmania.

There is only one species.

Herbivorous Marsupials:

Order Diprotodonta This large group consists of the most diverse of Australia's mammals, Wombats.

The Koala, Possums, and Kangaroos are members of this large group. They are easily distinguished by their basically herbivorous dentition, particularly the possession of one pair of strongly developed incisors on the lower jaw in reference to this characteristic, they are known as Diprotodont Marsupials, comprising the Order Diprotodonta.

The second and third toes of the hind foot are joined together in a condition known as syndactyly, Also characteristic of Bandicoots.

Wombats and Koalas are similar and make up the Families Vombatoida and Phascolarctidae

Phalangeridae, Possums and Cuscus, Petauridae Ring-tail possums and larger Gliders, Burramyidae Pygmy Possums and Feathertail Gliders, They are all, with some misgivings included in the Super Family Phalangerioidea.

The so called Honey possum is so different that it is placed in another family, the Tarsipedoida.

The Super Family Macropoidea, comprising the families Potoroidae Potoroos, Bettongs, Rat-Kangaroo and the Macropodidae, Kangaroos and Wallabies.

Elfin.